IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

1.   (Currently amended) A method for managing virtual properties that exist solely in a virtual form within a computer network and that have no physical counterparts, comprising:

maintaining an inventory of said virtual properties in a centralized database accessible by ~~a user~~ property owners via a network connection;

allowing said property owners to transfer ownership of their respective virtual properties via said network connection;

~~managing~~ maintaining updated records regarding ownership of said virtual properties in said centralized database; and

allowing said property owners to use but not ~~possession of~~ possess digital copies of said respective virtual properties ~~by corresponding property owners~~ within corresponding network spaces.

2.   (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of maintaining ~~step further~~ an inventory comprises searching for a desired one of said virtual properties within said inventory.

3.   (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said ~~managing~~ step of maintaining updated records regarding ownership ~~further~~ comprises associating said virtual properties with respective ones of said property owners.

4.   (Canceled)

5.   (Currently amended) The method of Claim 4 1, wherein said ~~transferring~~ step of allowing said property owners to transfer ownership ~~further~~ comprises allowing said property owners to sell their respective ~~selling said one of said~~ virtual properties to ~~a customer~~ buyers.

6.   (Currently amended) The method of Claim 4 1, wherein said ~~transferring~~ step of allowing said property owners to transfer ownership ~~further~~ comprises allowing said property owners to trade their respective ~~trading said one of said~~ virtual properties for another ones of said virtual properties.

7.   (Currently amended) The method of Claim 4 1, wherein said ~~transferring~~ step of allowing said property owners to transfer ownership ~~further~~ comprises allowing at least one of said property owners to ~~winning~~ win one of said virtual properties from another property owner in the course of a game.

8.   (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of coordinating with partners via said network to identify additional virtual properties not included in said inventory.

9.   (Currently amended)   A computer-implemented system for managing virtual properties that exist solely in a virtual form within a computer network and that have no physical counterparts, comprising:

a server connected to a network accessible by plural ~~user~~ property owner computers; and

an application program operable with said server to provide the functions of:

maintaining an inventory of virtual properties in a centralized database via said network ~~connection~~;

allowing property owners to transfer ownership of their respective virtual properties via said network connection;

~~managing~~ maintaining updated records regarding ownership of said virtual properties in said centralized database; and

allowing said property owners to use but not ~~possession of~~ digital copies of said respective virtual properties ~~by corresponding property owners~~ within corresponding network spaces.

10.   (Original) The system of Claim 9, further comprising a memory connected to said server and having a database of all said virtual properties maintained by said computer system.

11.   (Currently amended) The system of Claim 9, wherein said maintaining an inventory function ~~further~~ comprises searching for a desired one of said virtual properties within said inventory.

12.   (Currently amended)   The system of Claim 9, wherein said ~~managing~~ maintaining updated records regarding ownership function ~~further~~ comprises associating said virtual properties with respective ones of said property owners.

13.   (Canceled)

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14.   (Currently amended) The system of Claim ~~13~~ 9, wherein said ~~transferring~~ allowing property owners to transfer ownership function ~~further~~ comprises allowing said property owners to sell their respective ~~selling said one of said~~ virtual properties to a ~~customer~~ buyers.

15.   (Currently amended) The system of Claim ~~13~~ 9, wherein said ~~transferring~~ allowing property owners to transfer ownership function ~~further~~ comprises allowing said property owners to trade their respective ~~trading said one of said~~ virtual properties for another ones of said virtual properties.

16.   (Currently amended) The system of Claim ~~13~~ 9, wherein said ~~transferring~~ allowing property owners to transfer ownership function ~~further~~ comprises allowing at least one of said property owners to ~~winning~~ win one of said virtual properties from another property owner.

17.   (Original) The system of Claim 9, further comprising the function of coordinating with partners via said network to identify additional virtual properties not included in said inventory.